



United States Department of State
Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

ATROCITIES PREVENTION



BACKGROUND

In 2011, President Obama declared mass atrocities prevention a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility. The President committed the United States to becoming a global leader in preventing large-scale and deliberate attacks against civilians worldwide, but he made clear that the country cannot and should not intervene militarily every time there is an injustice or an imminent threat of mass atrocities. Instead, he called for the U.S. government to use its full arsenal of tools – diplomatic, political, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement – to prevent these terrible crimes. U.S. commitment to atrocities prevention is embodied in the establishment of the whole-of-government Atrocities Prevention Board (APB), which is led by the White House and tasked to help the U.S. government identify and address atrocity threats and oversee institutional changes so that the United States can better prevent and respond to mass atrocities against civilians.

THE ROLE OF DIPLOMACY IN ATROCITY PREVENTION

Preventing large-scale and deliberate attacks against civilians requires a concerted global effort and a wide range of options. Timely and effective use of our diplomacy and foreign assistance is central to any atrocities prevention effort. The State Department's diplomatic efforts include engagement with perpetrators, potential perpetrators, and enablers of atrocities, as well as coordinated support for vulnerable groups, victims, and those working to prevent or mitigate violence against civilians. The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) serves as the Department's secretariat for atrocities prevention, providing analysis, planning, programs, training, and tools.

APPROACH

The Department is focusing on preventing atrocities in three key ways:

COUNTRY WORK:

We are elevating attention and resources towards high risk countries that have an opportunity for preventive impact on the ground. We use new early warning models and the State/USAID Atrocity Assessment Framework to guide analysis of these situations, as well as new research on effective atrocities prevention tools and lessons learned to help guide our interventions.

MAINSTREAMING ATROCITIES PREVENTION:

We are strengthening the training, tools, and resources dedicated to atrocities prevention efforts. Our training helps embassy staff identify and respond to risks of mass atrocities against civilians. Our toolkits provide information to embassies about what interventions might work.

PARTNERSHIPS:

Preventing mass atrocities is a responsibility all nations share. Partnering with other governments, multilateral and regional organizations, and civil society organizations to prevent and respond to atrocity risks is a critical component of our efforts. We have developed such partnerships with the UN, EU, Stabilization Leaders Forum, and Prevention and Protection Working Group, which convenes civil society actors addressing conflict and atrocities prevention.